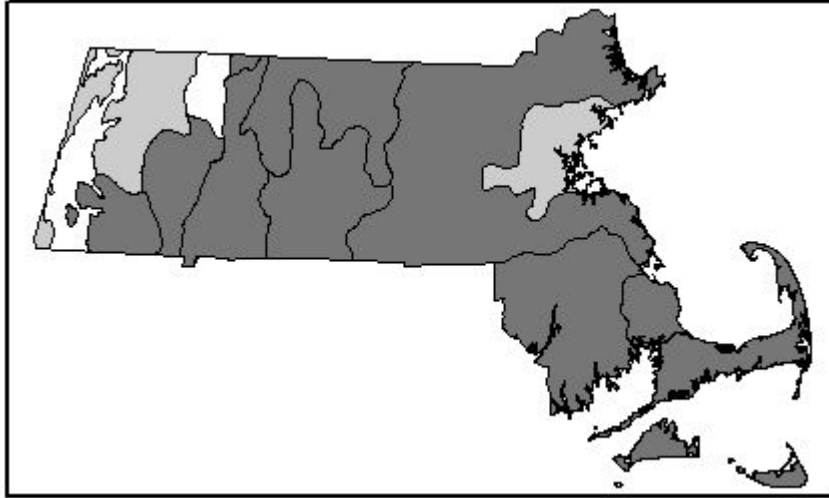


**Community Name:** PITCH PINE - SCRUB OAK COMMUNITY

**Community Code:** CT2B1F0000

**SRANK:** S2



**Concept:** Shrub dominated communities with scattered to dense trees and scattered openings. Shrubs are often very dense.

**Environmental Setting:** Pitch pine/scrub oak communities develop on droughty, low nutrient soils - usually deep, coarse, well-drained sands derived from glacial outwash -- in the coastal plain, the Connecticut River Valley, and other scattered areas throughout the northeast. Pitch pine/ scrub oak communities are a fire maintained and fire dependent community; most species in the community recover well from fire. The openings grade into heathland and grassland communities, which are larger. The community grades into Pitch Pine - Oak Forests which have tree oak species and much less scrub oak, and usually occur in less dry environments.

**Vegetation Description:** Pitch pines form an open canopy above a shrub layer dominated by shrub oaks, scrub oak (*Quercus ilicifolia*) and sometimes dwarf chinquapin oak (*Q. prinoides*). Older oaks may form a nearly impenetrable understory 3-4 m (10-15 feet) tall, or it may be more open and shorter. Huckleberries (*Gaylussacia baccata*) occur between the oak clones or under more open plants. Scattered openings of variable size support patches of heathland or grassland vegetation -- more or less sparse lowbush blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*), bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), lichen patches, little bluestem grass (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), sedges (primarily *Carex pensylvanica* and *C. rugosperma*), and beach heather (*Hudsonia tomentosa*). Cow wheat (*Melampyrum lineare*) and mayflower (*Epigaea repens*) are typically found on edges within the community.

**Associations:** Inland variants on sand of the Pitch Pine/ Scrub Oak Community tend to have more gray birch (*Betula populifolia*), trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) and black cherry (*Prunus serotina*) and pin (or fire) cherry (*Prunus pensylvanica*). A related community, Ridgetop Pitch Pine / scrub oak community occurs on bed rock ridge tops across the state. Maritime Pitch Pine on Dunes has little scrub oak and is much sparser. Pitch pine over sedges with scattered heath species usually develops on previously plowed soils.

**Habitat Values for Associated Fauna:** A large number of species of lepidopterans are restricted to the pitch pine/ scrub oak community, and its openings. The bird fauna is generally that of oak woodlands: Rufous-sided Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*), Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*), and ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*) are common. Whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*) and Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) are now increasingly restricted to sandy openings of pitch pine / scrub oak communities. American woodcock (*Philohela minor*) also use the openings.

# Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

## Associated Rare Plants:

COREMA CONRADII	BROOM CROWBERRY	SC
LUPINUS PERENNIS	WILD LUPINE	- WL

## Associated Rare Animals:

ABAGROTIS CRUMBI BENJAMINI	COASTAL HEATHLAND CUTWORM	SC
ACRONICTA ALBARUFA	BARRENS DAGGERMOTH	T
ANISOTA STIGMA	SPINY OAKWORM	SC
APHARETRA PURPUREA	BLUEBERRY SALLOW	SC
CATOCALA HERODIAS GERHARDI	GERHARD'S UNDERWING MOTH	T
CICINNUS MELSHEIMERI	MELSHEIMER'S SACK BEARER	T
CINGILIA CATENARIA	CHAIN DOT GEOMETER	SC
EACLES IMPERIALIS	IMPERIAL MOTH	SC
HEMILEUCA MAIA	COASTAL BARRENS BUCKMOTH	T
ITAME SP 1	PINE BARRENS ITAME	SC
LYCIA YPSILON	PINE BARRENS LYCIA	T
METARRANTHIS APICIARIA	BARRENS METARRANTHIS MOTH	E
ZALE SP 1	PINE BARRENS ZALE	SC
ZANCLOGNATHA MARTHA	PINE BARRENS ZANCLOGNATHA	T

**Examples with Public Access:** Southern Myles Standish SF (and Camps Cachalot and Squanto areas), Plymouth; Mashpee Pine Barrens, Mashpee; Manuel F. Correllus State Forest, Martha's Vineyard; Montague WMA, Montague.

**Threats:** Development, fragmentation, and erosion from heavy trail use. Fire suppression and severe wildfires.

**Management Needs:** Reintroduction of fire according to fire management plans. Many areas that have not burned for more than 20 years may need to have fuels mechanically reduced (brush cut) before prescribed fires are attempted.

## Synonyms

**USNVC/TNC:** Includes: Pinus rigida Woodlands Alliance -- Pinus rigida / Quercus ilicifolia/ Lespedeza capitata Woodlands [CEGL006025]and Pinus rigida Woodlands Alliance -- Pinus rigida / Quercus ilicifolia/ Myrica pensylvanica Woodlands [CEGL006315]; Pinus rigida Woodlands Alliance -- Pinus rigida/ Vaccinium spp. - Gaylussacia baccata Woodlands [CEGL005046].

**MA (old name):** NEW ENGLAND PITCH PINE/SCRUB OAK BARRENS.

**ME:** Pitch pine- scrub oak barren Community and includes Pitch pine- heath barren Community.

**NH:** Pitch pine scrub oak barrens Community.

**VT:** within Pine- oak- heath sandplain forest.

**NY:** Pitch pine - scrub oak barrens and Pitch pine- heath barrens.

**CT:** Pinus rigida Woodlands -- Pinus rigida / Q. ilicifolia comm; and Pinus rigida Woodlands -- Pinus rigida/ Vaccinium angustifolium.

**RI:** Pitch pine/ scrub oak barrens.

**Weatherbee:** Pitch pine/ scrub oak barren and associated Grassland community.

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